



## KENTUCKY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

### MEDIA ADVISORY

No. 16-122

October 7, 2016

**MEDIA CONTACT:** Nancy Rodriguez

**Office:** (502) 564-2000, ext. 4610 | **Cell:** (502) 330-5063 | **E-mail:** [nancy.rodriguez@education.ky.gov](mailto:nancy.rodriguez@education.ky.gov)

## **SEMIFINALISTS NAMED FOR 2017 KENTUCKY TEACHER OF THE YEAR**

(FRANKFORT, Ky.) – Nine outstanding teachers from across the state – three elementary, three middle and three high school teachers – are semifinalists for the 2017 Kentucky Teacher of the Year Award, the Kentucky Department of Education and Valvoline™ announced today.

Winners of the Elementary, Middle and High School Teacher of the Year Awards, in addition to the overall 2017 Kentucky Teacher of the Year, will be announced at a ceremony at 10 a.m. ET on October 19, in the Rotunda of the Capitol Building in Frankfort.

Competing for Elementary Teacher of the Year are:

- Kim Delaney, Longbranch Elementary, Boone County
- Kellie Jones, Taylor County Elementary, Taylor County
- Jennifer C. O'Daniel, Olive Hill Elementary, Carter County

Middle school semifinalists are:

- Sarah Mills, Eastside Middle School, Bullitt County
- Candida Murphy, Robert D. Campbell Junior High, Clark County
- Brandi F. Smith, Madison Middle School, Madison County

In the high school category, the semifinalists are:

- Tricia Shelton, Boone County High School, Boone County
- Ron A. Skillern, Bowling Green High School, Bowling Green Independent
- Cathy Conley, Knott County Central High School, Knott County

The nine semifinalists are among 24 educators who were named 2017 Valvoline Teacher Achievement Award (TAA) winners. They were chosen based on their scores from the first round of judging, which was conducted by a blue-ribbon panel of veteran educators. Applications included information on nominees' teaching philosophies, teaching experiences, involvement in their respective communities and letters of recommendation.

Classroom visits and personal interviews with each of the nine semifinalists will result in the selection of the 2017 Elementary School, Middle School and High School Teachers of the Year. A culmination of these scores results in the selection of the 2017 Kentucky Teacher of the Year. This individual then will represent Kentucky in the 2017 National Teacher of the Year competition.

(more)

**Visit our website at <http://www.education.ky.gov>**

Follow us on Twitter at [www.twitter.com/kydeptofed](http://www.twitter.com/kydeptofed) and Like us on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/kydeptofed](http://www.facebook.com/kydeptofed)

Valvoline will present the 24 Teacher Achievement Award recipients with cash awards and certificates at the awards ceremony in Frankfort. In addition to cash awards, the three Kentucky Teachers of the Year also will receive custom-designed glassware commemorating their accomplishments, and all 24 educators will be honored at a special luncheon that day.

The Kentucky Teacher Awards program combines the best elements of what was formerly known as the Ashland Teacher Achievement Awards. Since Valvoline is now an independent, publicly traded company headquartered in Lexington, Ky., the company is now sponsoring the Teacher Achievement Awards and the Kentucky Teacher of the Year programs. This marks the 16th year the Kentucky Department of Education and Ashland/Valvoline have partnered to honor Kentucky educators. Since 1988, approximately \$776,500 has been awarded to 524 teachers in grades K to 12.

###

**Visit our website at <http://www.education.ky.gov>**

Follow us on Twitter at [www.twitter.com/kydeptofed](http://www.twitter.com/kydeptofed) and Like us on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/kydeptofed](http://www.facebook.com/kydeptofed)